

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 15, 2007. Claims 17 to 31 are in the application, with Claims 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, and 27 being independent. Claims 1 to 16 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 26 have been amended herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The Examiner has not yet acknowledged the claim for foreign priority. Such acknowledgment is respectfully requested. In this regard, the certified copy of the Japanese priority document was transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office by the International Bureau.

Applicants note with appreciation that Claims 27 to 31 have been allowed. These claims have not been amended herein, and are therefore believed to remain in condition for allowance.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 17 to 26. In keeping with this indication, Claims 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 26 have been rewritten in independent form. The additional changes made to these claims are not believed to affect their allowability.


Claims 1 to 9, 11, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Publication No. 2005/0217565 (Lahreche), and Claims 10, 12, 13, 15, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Lahreche. The foregoing actions have been taken without conceding the correctness of these rejections, and strictly to obtain an earlier allowance.

An Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted herewith, and consideration of the documents cited therein is respectfully requested.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Damond E. Vadnais", is written over a horizontal line.

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